



Coalición de Derechos Humanos  
c/o Arizona Border Rights Foundation  
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Tucson, AZ 85702

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# Coalición de Derechos Humanos

Volume 2, Issue 2 Quarterly Newsletter Spring/Summer 2011

Ningún Ser Humano es Ilegal!~~~No Human Being is Illegal!

## Reflections on the Migrant Trail

by Kat Rodriguez, Program Director

I just returned from the 8th Annual Migrant Trail, a 75-mile walk from Sásabe, Sonora to Tucson, Arizona. The purpose of the Walk is to bear witness to the loss of life, the deaths of thousands of women, men and children on the US-México border by walking through the corridor where most human remains are recovered. Derechos Humanos has sponsored the Migrant Trail since the beginning, and I have been honored to walk every year.

Eight years ago, when a friend came to our weekly Derechos Humanos meeting with the idea for the Walk, I signed up to be part of the organizing committee. That first year, there were about thirty of us, and many of us had spent years working on the border. Many of us have friends that have crossed the border here in Arizona, and some of us have known people who have died as a result. The idea of being in that space, of physically being present in an intentional way, was highly appealing to me.

It would be impossible for anyone who has never been a migrant to be able to understand what walking that trail feels. Besides the incredible amount of support that we have— water whenever we want it, support vehicles to carry our gear and anyone struggling to keep up, bandages and blister kits, and allies bringing meals out to us— we have the assurance that we will arrive safely.

Even stripping all of that from us, we exist free of the primal fear that I have seen in countless migrants. I once sat in a car with a woman so terrified that the smell of fear rolled off of her in long, powerful waves, and I finally understood what is meant when they say that animals can smell fear. I've talked to countless people who call to report a loved one missing, hearing fear lace every word they speak as they describe clothing and hair and eyes and teeth, hearing them desperately trying not to voice the fear that death will be the answer they are given.

Fear of law enforcement is something that is, for the most part, foreign to U.S. citizens— many of us assume that law enforcement is there to help us, and do not make conscious efforts to avoid any sort of detection or attention. I have learned, in my time at Derechos Humanos, the incredible lengths to which people must go to in order to live their lives. My privilege shames me when I think about this other reality, this sub-existence that we have carved out for the people that we so hypocritically depend on in this nation. I try to think about these things as we walk twelve to sixteen miles each day on the Walk.

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**ABUSE CLINIC**  
Every Tuesday & Friday  
**5:30-7:00 p.m.**  
631 S. 6th Avenue

Meet with us to discuss your issues involving:



- \* Law Enforcement Abuses (Police, Border Patrol, Sheriff)
- \* Labor Abuses
- \* Housing Problems
- \* Discrimination
- \* Vigilante and Hate Group Abuse

**Tel: 520.770.1373**

Our meetings are held every Thursday  
**5:30pm-6:45pm**  
**Sam Lena Library**  
(1607 S. 6th Avenue)  
Meetings are free and open to the community.

### Calendar of Upcoming Events & Activities

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
Community Potluck  
July 22, 2011

Naturalization Fair  
August 20, 2011

Labor Day Picnic and Rally  
September 5, 2011

Visit [www.derechoshumanosaz.net](http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net) and join our listserv for the most recent updates on events and activities!

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## A Note from Marla Pacheco, our new Rights Program Coordinator!

My name is Marla Pacheco and I'm the new Rights Program Coordinator at Derechos Humanos. I was born in México and moved to Tucson when I was 10 years old. I was raised in a traditional Mexican household. I identify with the people who come to the Abuse Clinic, and I'm very closely tied to the work I do.

People come into our office with many different issues and problems, such as unpaid wages, housing, discrimination, and law enforcement abuse—anything that would make someone feel they're being discriminated against or abused. We have seen a lot of cases about trailer parks, mainly because the Landlord and Tenant Act is not the same for residential homes and apartments, and a loophole in the system creates an opportunity for abuse.

We recently contacted the victims of law enforcement abuse at the May 3rd Tucson Unified School District school board meeting. We documented more than 10 cases of

*Marla (left) and Zuzanna, part of Derechos Humanos' amazing staff, at this year's march and rally to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr.*



individuals who believe their rights were violated by the police that day, and they are now following up with a local attorney.

In addition to handling the cases, I also coordinate volunteers for the program. If you want to make a difference in your community, please contact me for volunteer opportunities. Derechos Humanos is always in need of volunteers for the office and Abuse Clinic.

*Contact Marla at 520.770.1373 or marla@derechoshumanosaz.net*

## Report Back from the Peoples Global Assembly

by Isabel Garcia, Co-Chair of Derechos Humanos

On November 1, 2010, Leilani Clark and I were honored to represent Tucson, Arizona, at the historic People's Global Assembly held in Mexico City, in preparation for the civil society parallel hearings to the UN High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development held the following week in Puerto Vallarta. People from across the world met to discuss the issues facing migrants worldwide and to present our unique perspectives.

I was one of the speakers in the Opening Plenary, invited to discuss the human rights situation along the border, specifically in Arizona. Derechos Humanos has participated in these actions since the first PGA was held in New York City in 2005. We continue this important connection and work through its membership and work with the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) and the Migrant Rights Institute (MRI), which the NNIRR played a major role in forming. The MRI has been instrumental in raising the human rights framework in the global context, as the UN discussions have almost exclusively focused on "migration and development."

Leilani and I were honored and excited to be part of this international gathering with hundreds of migrant rights leaders from across the globe. They heard the testimonies of many migrants, from Europe, Africa, South America, Guatemala, Thailand, and many other countries, where the pressures to migrate have become ever-so-more severe, with economic and political policies impacting thousands of communities, and with border militarization on the increase everywhere. They were able to participate in many panels to expose the growth of the militarization under the guise of "national security." As migrants in the U.S., we are committed to building bridges and models of collaboration, understanding that we must organize for human rights across the world.



*Isabel (left) and Leilani presenting at the Peoples Global Assembly. Photo courtesy of Arnoldo Garcia.*

## Report Back from Turning the Tide Summit

by Maria Eugenia Carrasco, Promotora Program Coordinator

I have just returned from the "Turning the Tide" summit in Arlington, Virginia. Along with Jason Aragon of Pan Left Productions and Asiya Mir from Unidos, I was there to represent Arizona and the work being done here against racist legislation and oppressive policies.

At the summit, there was a lot of attention on Arizona because of SB1070, which is spreading into other states. Local communities and activists are organizing, and many were excited to talk to Arizona representatives, especially looking at Derechos Humanos and how we have fought against racist legislation. They were very interested in our "Yo Soy Testigo" campaign and the positive results we have obtained with it.

We have 13 Promotoras of Derechos who have been very involved in our community, not only in our different events but also giving presentations of "Conozca sus Derechos" which is a "Know Your Rights" workshop for our community, empowering folks as to what to do when stopped by the authorities. One of the Promotoras answers calls to our 24-hour "Yo Soy Testigo (I am a Witness) crisis hotline, not only documenting abuses and racial profiling, but also violations of SB1070. This campaign is an alliance between Derechos Humanos, Migra Patrol-Copwatch and Pan Left Productions to stop the collaboration of local authorities with the Border Patrol.

This campaign of documenting abuses with video and photos has been successful in reducing the police abuses in our community, and we use the footage to create educational "Know Your Rights" videos. Allies across the country have used these videos to do grassroots educational work in their communities.



*Maria Eugenia supporting Tucson youth at the TUSD School Board meeting*

Coalición de Derechos Humanos with the UA Immigration Law Student Association and American Immigration Lawyers' Association invite you to a

## Naturalization Fair

Saturday August 20, 2011

10:00am to 2:00pm

Most Holy Trinity Parish

1300 N. Greasewood



The Naturalization Fair is a community effort to assist legal permanent residents to apply for citizenship. Volunteers process the applications, immigration attorneys review, and green card holders are put on the path to citizenship. Help support immigrant communities in Arizona!

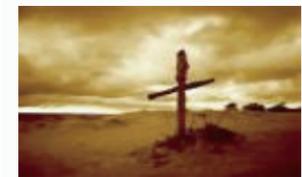
## Let's get out the vote for 2012!

To volunteer at the event, or to make an appointment to be processed for yourself or someone you know, contact Derechos Humanos at 520.770.1373

Derechos Humanos invites you to a weekly

## Community Vigil

Every Thursday at 7:00 pm



El Tiradito Shrine (on Main St, between Simpson & Cushing Street)

Join us as we remember our sisters and brothers who perish or are lost in the desert every day, and discuss the growing concerns over U.S. immigration and border policies.

## Interested in Volunteering?

We are always in need of volunteers (particularly those who are fluent Spanish speakers) to help us in our office, answering phones and working in our Abuse Clinic.

If you are interested in getting involved in the work of Derechos Humanos, we invite you to attend our weekly meetings to find out about the events and activities we are organizing.

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There is something very cleansing about physical movement. The repetition of your heel, toe, heel, toe on the ground, and how that moves upward through your body. Many of us carry crosses bearing the names of individuals who have lost their lives on the Arizona border, and I try to think about how I can do justice to the ones I seek to honor. This year I walked with Alfonso Hernandez Ramirez, age 50, and Miguel Angel Rodriguez Ortiz, age 4. I thought about these two—a man in the prime of his life, most likely with a wife and children at home, and a little boy who would never have those things because he was never allowed to grow up.

I think about the fact that some of the migrants who die on the border are not first-time crossers who have traveled up from the south of México, but people who have been living for years in Phoenix or Chicago or Atlanta. Many view Arpaio's crackdown on the immigrant communities as an unjust deportation, but it can also be a death sentence for those who struggle to return. Perhaps the officer who calls Border Patrol does not see it this way, but this is the reality. When a woman or man has lived here for fourteen years, gotten married, had children, bought a home or business and is then suddenly deported, where do we think they will go? Of course they will cross the border. Of course they will try to get home.

More and more of the stories I hear of relatives reporting loved ones missing are people who have created lives for themselves in this country, people who have become part of our communities. We cannot forget, in denouncing the deaths on the border, to denounce the policies that send them to that unforgiving desert. Trade policies that have displaced agriculturally based workers from mostly Indigenous communities must be ended. The militarization of the border must be halted, and the border wall removed. Deportations must no longer be permitted to tear families apart. Racial profiling and collaboration with Border Patrol must not be permitted, not just because it is unjust and unfair and racist, but because people are dying as a result.

After the first year of the Walk, we discussed doing it for a second year. It was a long, intentional discussion, and in the end we decided that we would only do it a second year if we were willing to commit to walking every year until the deaths stop. To date, I have walked 600 miles to honor that promise. With every step we take, I hope that the hearts and minds of those who have turned hard hearts toward our migrant and immigrant sisters and brothers can be softened toward compassion and love, and I pray for the day that there are no deaths to denounce, no injustice to right, and for the day that we end the Migrant Trail.

### Check out our NEW LOOK!



Thanks to the talents of Jason Aragon of Pan Left Productions, Derechos Humanos is proud to announce the launching of our new website! Check us out!

[www.derechoshumanosaz.net](http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net)

Keep updated on our most recent events and activities, check out our Know Your Rights videos and public service announcements, and sign up to join our listserv!

### Fundación México to Grant Eight Scholarships to Immigrant Youth

This year, Tucson-based, non-profit organization Fundación México will grant a total of eight scholarships of one thousand dollars each for students to begin classes in the 2011-2012 school year.



Recently Fundación México renewed its alliance with the Tucson-Mexico Sister Cities, which will host two of the eight grants. The resources are for students who do not qualify to pay rates as residents of college or university.

June 24th is the deadline to apply for scholarships.

Awards will be announced on July 22nd.

How to apply: Interested parties can obtain the application on the website: [www.fundacionmexico.org](http://www.fundacionmexico.org)

For more info contact Florencio I. Zaragoza 520.891.7025

# We Need Your Support!

Dear Friend,

We hope that this letter finds you in a good place, and that the first half of 2011 has been a good one for all those who struggle for peace and justice. Here in Arizona, we are just entering into triple digit temperatures, two weeks short of the official start of summer.

Once again, Derechos Humanos is reaching out to you to ask for your generous support. As you may know, the struggle for justice continues on the border. Through the end of May, the remains of more than 88 men and women have been recovered on the border. The attacks on Ethnic Studies continue, with the Tucson Police Department showing up in riot gear to a school board meeting, resulting in more than a dozen reported cases of police abuse. Arizona ranks 48th in the nation in education, social services and government entitlements. Arizona legislators such as Russell Pearce continue to focus attacks on immigrants, social services and education, while our misguided Attorney General Tom Horne intends to put efforts into the defense of the unconstitutional SB 1070.

But some things are changing.

Students, teachers, and supporters of Ethnic Studies continue to stand strong, demanding an immediate halt to the misinformation being perpetrated about the success rates of Ethnic Studies students. A local effort to recall Russell Pearce resulted in more than 18,000 signatures being collected by constituents in his district, more than double what is required for a recall. The completion of the 8th Annual Migrant Trail Walk, a 75-mile walk to honor migrants who have died on the border, saw the participation of more than 60 individuals from ten different states and six different countries, who intend to go back to their communities to talk about their border experience.

Derechos Humanos does not intend to give up the struggle for justice and human rights, and we need your help to continue our work!

Your generous donation of **\$25, \$50, \$100 or more** will help us continue to educate about the human rights crisis on the border, the continued attack on human and civil rights of border communities, and the devastation caused by the militarization of the U.S. – México border. Help us to defend the future of our children and families, moral crossroads at which our state—and nation—seem to stand.

This struggle is about human life. It is about the basic right to dignity and existence. It is about standing strong against any injustice perpetrated on any one of us, and ensuring a better future for all. We hope that you will continue to stand with us in our work.

En Solidaridad,

Jon Miles  
Derechos Humanos Steering Committee Member

### Our Mission

Coalición de Derechos Humanos is a grassroots organization that promotes respect for human/civil rights and fights the militarization of the Southern Border region, discrimination, and human rights abuses by federal, state, and local law enforcement officials affecting U.S. and non-U.S. citizens alike.

### To Donate

Make checks or money orders payable to

**Arizona Border Rights Foundation**

P.O. Box 1286, Tucson, AZ 85702

Your donations is tax-deductible. Arizona Border Rights Foundation, a 501c3 organization, is the fiscal sponsor of Coalición de Derechos Humanos. Donations can also be made online at [www.derechoshumanosaz.net](http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net)

Your tax-deductible donation makes you an ally in our fight for social justice. Donate today to help make Arizona better for us all.

*For those who have not heard of the Alliance for Global Justice (AFGJ), we would like to share with you this powerful and moving piece written by Chuck Kaufman, the National Co-Coordinator. We consider AFGJ to be a strong ally, and are happy that they have moved their office to Tucson. Please see below for contact information.*

## Yes, Virginia, There is Evil in the World



By Chuck Kaufman (AFGJ National Co-Coordinator)  
May 19th, 2011

I have been hearing a lot lately that we need to be proactive; that we need to focus our work on positive things. If we believe that a better world is possible, we need to build that better world.

All that is true – up to a point.

Augusto C. Sandino, the Nicaraguan “General of Free Men”, had a vision. He, and a group that shared his vision, planned to start a utopian, self-sustaining and democratic commune where they could build their own version of a better world. But he knew that the commune would never be allowed to survive, much less thrive, while his country was occupied by US marines. So he led a successful, six-year guerrilla war from 1927-1933 to oust the foreign invaders. He left from a peace dinner with the country’s president thinking that he could finally lay down his sword and take up his plow. Instead he was abducted by troops trained by the marines to keep “order” in their stead. To this day his body has not been found, his community remains a dream, and his country suffered through 45 years of US-supported dictatorship before the Sandinista Triumph in 1979.

To paraphrase a Christmas editorial in the 1897 New York Sun, “Yes, Virginia, there is evil in the world.”

The Mexican group, Las Abejas (The Bees), had a dream as well. They were a pacifist group of Zapatista supporters in the community of Acteal, Chiapas. On December 22, 1997, while in a prayer meeting at the Catholic Church, they were set upon by the paramilitary group Paz y Justicia (Peace and Justice). Forty-five people were slaughtered over several hours while the near-by Mexican army refused to intervene. Women and children were among those massacred including pregnant women who were stabbed or shot in the belly to ensure that their unborn children did not survive.

Yes, Virginia, there is evil in the world.

On April 5, 2010, WikiLeaks released a classified US military video, shot from the gun- site camera of an Apache helicopter, showing the indiscriminate killing in Iraq of over a dozen people including two Reuters news staff, and the wounding of two young children. The video included audio of the American soldiers glorying in the slaughter.

Yes, Virginia, there is evil in the world.

Torture at Abu Graib, indefinite imprisonment at Guantanamo Bay, predator drones killing women and children in Pakistan, Israelis firing on unarmed Palestinians during the commemoration of Al Nakba (The Catastrophe), mass graves in Mexico, massacres in Guatemala, police firing US-donated tear gas canisters at demonstrators’ heads in Honduras, racist laws against immigrants, house raids and grand jury subpoenas for peace activists in the American Midwest, oh yes, Virginia, there is evil in the world.

After a decade in the current anti-war movement, a quarter century in Latin America solidarity, and a life-time of witnessing wars, coups, bombings, and democracy only for those who can pay for it, I’m tired and frustrated. It would be nice to weed my own garden for awhile, to grow and eat organic vegetables.

But more and more I look to the Abolition Movement, both slave and free, for my inspiration and my reason to go on. Slavery would not have ended without struggle. I don’t buy the myth that it was doomed by economic factors. That’s the story they tell us so we won’t believe that our struggles make a difference. No amount of focus on positive things, on personal fulfillment, on community joy would have lanced the awful pustule, that maggot-filled boil that was chattel slavery. Only through men and women, black and white, putting their lives, their fortunes and their health on the line to change the culture of their day, was this blot on our humanity eradicated from our shores.

No amount of prayer and meditation, no amount of giving to the poor, no amount of being nice to your maid or generous to her children brought about the Voting Rights Act, equal education, and an end to lynching and the Ku Klux Klan. No. It came about through human beings, white and black and brown, militantly wrestling with evil and accepting the beatings, the jailings, the killings that shocked the conscience of society. It came about because people like you and me refused to stop or be distracted until the laws and the culture which defended racial supremacy were changed and the process of recognizing the humanness of us all could begin.

Mothers Day was not founded to honor our mothers; it was founded by mothers who had lost their sons in the Civil War as a way for them to demand an end to war.

So yes, let us focus on the positive. Let us build our sustainable communities. Let us practice our yoga or religion or whatever gives us personal strength and fortitude to carry on. But let us never forget that there is evil in the world; evil that has the capability to destroy all our good works. Let us never mistake actions that make us feel good with actions that are necessary. If we are to build a better world, we must first defeat the evil that makes this one so bad for so many. There is no other way forward than through struggle.

As citizens and residents of the country that is the greatest threat to world peace, the greatest threat to human survival, we have a moral obligation to struggle against evil. To react IS to focus on the positive. We are at a moment in history when it is not possible to live a moral life, when it is not possible to build a better world, unless we are every day on the barricades struggling to end the wars, struggling to cut the bloated Pentagon budget, struggling to stop the corporate rape of the environment, struggling for an end to Empire and corporate greed.

In reality, it is a false dichotomy to say we have to be either reactive or proactive. We have to be both. No matter how tired or frustrated we feel at times, our lives are easy.

Very few of us don’t know how we will feed our children tonight. Very few of us worry that we will be killed by paramilitaries or police on our way home from work. Very few of us live with the stress of knowing that a knock on the door could end our freedom or a hellfire missile through the roof could end our life. The truth is, we really do have the capacity to work on those things which we believe will build a better world while at the same time we struggle against those things which inhibit its birth. We really have no other choice.

*“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must... undergo the fatigues of supporting it.”*  
– Thomas Paine

*The Sandino Center, AFGJ’s Tucson office, is located at 1050 S. Verdugo, Tucson, 85745.  
The contact phone number is: 202-544-9355*